GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PERSONNEL,PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5977
ANSWERED ON:04.05.2005
AMENDMENT OF FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT, 2002
Abdullakutty Shri A.P.

Will the Minister of PERSONNEL,PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is committed to bring about amendment in the Freedom of Information Act, 2002;

(b) if so, whether this proposed amendment to the Act calls for the enforcement of penal measures like imprisonment and fines on Government officials who block information from the public domain;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether the Government also proposes to bring in a legislation titled `Duty to Publish` Bill;

(f) if so, the details thereof;

(g) if not, the reasons therefor;

(h) whether the Government has consulted various Ministries/departments and State Governments in respect of Freedom of Information Act;

(i) if so, the details thereof; and

(j)if not, the reasons for delay in obtaining the consultations?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTRY AFFAIRS.(SHRI SURESH PACHOURI)

(a) to (g): With a view to make the Right to Information Act more progressive, participatory and meaningful, Government have decided to repeal `The Freedom of Information Act, 2002` and enact a new law in its place following which `The Right to Information Bill, 2004` has been introduced in the Lok Sabha on 23rd December, 2004.

The Bill contains a penal provision under which a Public Information Officer who has failed to provide information without any reasonable cause within the specified time period, will be liable to punishment. A provision also exists wherein every public authority shall constantly endeavour to take steps to provide as much information suo moto to the public at regular intervals through various means of communications so that the public have minimum resort to the use of the contemplated Act to obtain information.

(h) to (j): Government had obtained the views/comments of various Central Ministries/Departments and the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations and these were duly taken into consideration while finalizing the provisions of the `Freedom of Information Act, 2002`.